

Heroic actions save fellow Airman's life

By Senior Airman **Shaun Emery**
332nd AEW Public Affairs

What should have been a normal day for Maj. Michael Ryan, formerly the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing protocol chief, turned out to be a day where his heroic actions would save the life of a fellow Airman.

As Major Ryan was setting up for a change of command ceremony, Balad Air Base went into alarm red.

The base was under attack and mortars were hitting inside the fence line. When a mortar hit a populated area of the base, Major Ryan said he had a feeling inside that something wasn't right. Sprinting from the Town Hall, Major Ryan made his way to the impact area where his worst fears unfolded.

Senior Airman Brian Kolfage, a former member of the 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, had been seriously wounded during the attack. On his way to get

water, Airman Kolfage found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time and a blast from one of the mortars severed his hand and both legs.

"I could see him lying on the ground," explained Major Ryan. "Another airman arrived and we immediately started first aid."

According to Major Ryan, Airman Kolfage was semi-conscious. Major Ryan started self-aid buddy care techniques and administering First Aid.

At that moment, another round impacted near the area. Without regard for his own personal safety, Major Ryan continued administering buddy care to Airman Kolfage and directed other Airmen to get back to their tents and take cover.

After medical assistance arrived, going the extra mile, Major Ryan began checking tents to make sure no one else was injured.

For his actions Major Ryan was presented the bronze star



Photo by Senior Airman Jason Robertson

Maj. Michael Ryan, formerly the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing protocol chief receives the bronze star with valor from Brig. Gen. Blair Hansen, 332nd AEW commander, for his actions going above and beyond the call.

with valor by Brig. Gen. Blair Hansen, 332nd AEW commander, May 19, for actions going above and beyond the call to duty.

Major Ryan selflessly disregarded his own personal safety to provide immediate first aid to Airman Kolfage.

While Airman Kolfage couldn't predict that he would be a victim of attack that day, he was fortunate that Major Ryan was ready to answer the call to duty and save his life.

According to General

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Lending a hand



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Be on the lookout



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Convoy keeps truckin'



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Airmen get hands dirty for good cause

Junior enlisted council works to improve hospital morale room

By Senior Airman **Tim Beckham**
332nd AEW Public Affairs

What do scattered books and a lack of seating space have in common? They are the setting for the base hospital's morale room, but not for long thanks to the Panther Airman's Advisory Council.

Members of the PAAC are currently



Photo by Senior Airman **Tim Beckham**

Airman 1st Class Cory Halma, 332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron help desk technician, screws pieces of wood together for furniture that will go into the Air Force Theatre Hospital morale room.

building shelves, tables and benches for the room in an effort to make the patients' wait at the hospital a little more comfortable.

"When I went in the room, the books shelves were falling apart and there were books all over the floor," said Airman 1st Class Roger Rhymer, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing chaplain assistant and PAAC president. "So (the morale room) really needs a lot of work done and that's what the PAAC is going to do."

The base has many organizations that provide volunteer opportunities, to include the PAAC, the Redtail 56 Council, the Balad Top 3 and the Company Grade Officer's Council.

"We couldn't accomplish many of the improvements we take for granted without volunteers," said Senior Master Sgt. Graham Smith, 332nd AEW first sergeant. "Volunteering our time and energy, especially through our wing professional organizations, is not only personally satisfying but strengthens our Airmen and makes a difference. Professional organizations leave a lasting legacy for those that follow in our footsteps."

The PAAC might be giving the morale room a new makeover, but the real project is raising the patients' spirits while they are waiting.

"The overall goal of this project

is to increase the morale of the people who come to the hospital for treatment," said Airman Rhymer. "If you give (the people waiting) things to do or better things to have, it might help pass the time and they might realize that they are truly cared for and appreciated."

Members of the medical facility said they were very happy to have their morale room upgraded with new furniture built by the Airmen's council.

"We are very appreciative of the time and energy the members of the PAAC have committed to self-help projects here at the Air Force Theater Hospital," said Chief Master Sgt. Michael Hodge, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group superintendent. "These young men and women saw an opportunity to make a difference for the troops who are treated at this facility and are dedicated to improving the quality of life for these heroes."

The PAAC already has other projects planned for the near future.

"We have a couple (projects) in our sight but we are trying to take it one at a time so we don't get too far ahead of schedule," said Airman Rhymer.

Airmen interested in joining the PAAC or finding out more about the council are encouraged to attend the meetings, which are scheduled for Wednesdays at the Tuskegee Town Chapel at 5 p.m.

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Airmen share deployed anniversary together

By Senior Airman **Shaun Emery**
332nd AEW Public Affairs

Two Airmen who took an oath to the Air Force and to each other celebrated their first wedding anniversary April 21 while deployed together here.

Airman 1st Class Stephanie Thompson, 332nd Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility command section administrator, and her husband Airman 1st Class Jacob Thompson, Air Force Theater Hospital patient administration department administrator, volunteered for deployment from Keesler Air Force Base, Miss.

At a table for two at the Green Bean Coffee Shop in Tuskegee Town, the couple said how fortunate they are to share their anniversary as well as their deployed experience with each other.

"It's indescribable how happy I am he's here," said Stephanie. "Now I don't know what I would do without him."

The couple shares the same schedule and down day, which allows them to meet after work where they can talk about their busy and sometimes stressful days.

"Talking to my wife is a lot different than a co-worker or supervisor," said Jacob. "She is someone I can trust and confide in."

In their line of work, the couple witnesses the ugliness of war. They said their deployment has been a humbling experience.

"We see a lot of patients right off the battlefield," said Stephanie. "It's difficult, but it's much easier to manage with each other around."

While being together is wonderful, Jacob and Stephanie said they've dealt



Photo by Senior Airman Shaun Emery

Airman 1st Class Jacob Thompson joins his wife A1C Stephanie Thompson for a coffee at the Green Bean Coffee Shop in Tuskegee Town after a day of work.

with separation before. Stephanie's first duty station was Lackland AFB, Texas. The couple has spent many hours traveling from Texas to Mississippi.

"Being apart when you're married is very tough," said

Stephanie. "I sympathize with everyone who has a spouse back home."

Jacob and Stephanie said they're looking forward to future anniversaries, and this particular one they know they won't forget.

Balad Airmen catch glimpse of the dark side

AAFES presents free showing of Episode III

By Army Sgt. First Class **Heatherann Bozeman**
Army and Air Force Exchange Services

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq — Last week, Star Wars fans around the world filled theaters for the premiere of *Episode III - Revenge of the Sith* - even those deployed to Iraq.

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service's Sustainer theater in Balad, Iraq, ensured that more than a thousand deployed Stars Wars fans didn't miss out on the long-anticipated premiere of the newest and final episode in the saga.

All of the air conditioned theater's 740 seats were filled for all three May 18th screenings of the *Revenge of the Sith*.

Many moviegoers were die-hard fans

who couldn't wait to see the storyline come full circle.

Members of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing were on hand to see the final installment of the series.

"Out of all the episodes that have been released, this is the one I am the most excited about," said 1st Lt. David Stevenson, 332nd AEW wing executive officer. "I saw *Return of the Jedi* in the theater when I was a kid, and have been a big fan ever since."

Senior Airman Jeremy Ketchum, 332nd Communications Squadron, admits that although he isn't as passionate about the series as other fans, the show was worth the wait.

"It's really cool to think I was one of the first people on the planet to see *Episode III*," said Airman Ketchum. The experience of seeing a movie like Star Wars in a deployed environment added something

“ For two hours, the audience forgot they were deployed ... It was almost like being home. ”

- 1st Lt. David Stevenson
332nd AEW executive officer

special to the movie watching experience, said Lieutenant Stevenson.

"For two hours, the audience forgot they were deployed," he said. "It was almost like being home."

Actor Dean Cain, who is touring Iraq to motivate the troops, was in the audience for the Operation Iraqi Freedom premiere.

"The troops deserve to see it here in Iraq," said Cain. "Seeing the show with them was a surreal experience, especially during the fight scenes when the GIs would hoot and holler."

New logo increases IED awareness

Milit-National Coalition - Iraq Public Affairs

BAHGADAD, Iraq — Improvised explosive devices are the number one killers of America's sons and daughters serving in Iraq, and the Joint IED Defeat Task Force at Camp Victory kicked off an information campaign Wednesday in an effort to increase IED awareness and save lives.

The "5-and-25" campaign is designed to increase IED awareness and reduce the effectiveness of the mountain of makeshift bombs being produced by insurgents. Officials say the deceptive devices account for more than half of the coalition deaths that have occurred since the start of the Iraq war in March 2003.

"This name seemed appropriate because 5-and-25 means awareness," said Master Sgt. William Johnson, one of three logo designers. "5-and-25 means checking the area around you for a threat. Every time you stop outside a secure area, you always should check. Not checking could get you killed."

More specifically, 5-and-25 requires that troops look for anything out of the ordinary within a five-meter radius of their vehicles, according to counter-IED policies. If halted long enough, forces should then exit their vehicles and conduct a 25-meter sweep around their position. Halting for as little as four minutes can prove costly.

Efforts to date have reduced the IED casualty rate by more than 45 percent during the period of April 2004 through February 2005 — but that is not seen as enough.

"IEDs are our number one killers here," said Eric Egland, who works at the Iraq headquarters of Joint IED Defeat Task Force at Camp Victory. The task force is responsible for developing innovative ways to rid the country of IEDs.

The deadly devices are considered a highly effective means of killing people because they can quickly be set up anywhere and be set to blow at any time. They have been disguised as virtually everything from tree trunks and dead animals to bicycles and pregnant women. Royal Australian Air Force Group Capt. David Stockdale, deputy chair of the IED Working Group at Multi-

National Corps-Iraq, said there is no limit to what insurgents will use for IEDs.

Captain Stockdale has been actively working the issue of IEDs and their effects since arriving in Iraq a few months ago.

"The IED is one of the most dangerous threats to coalition forces," Captain Stockdale said. "To mitigate their effects, we wanted to put together an information campaign that would make the IED reaction drill a normal part of daily activities for the coalition forces. IEDs can be any time, anywhere, any shape; the trends change. The aim is to get the message to the field. It's dangerous out there."

"The (designers) suggested we needed to have (a logo) that everybody recognizes," said Lt. Col. Theodore Martin, field team leader, Joint IED Defeat Task Force-Iraq. "5-and-25" became that logo. "The most important thing coalition forces can accomplish is situational awareness when they're outside the wire; it is the most basic (tactic) that you have to master."

"There's no predicting exactly where, when or how you're going to meet an IED when you're driving around," Stockdale said. "Practicing those basic methods and regularly using them significantly enhances your chances of survival."

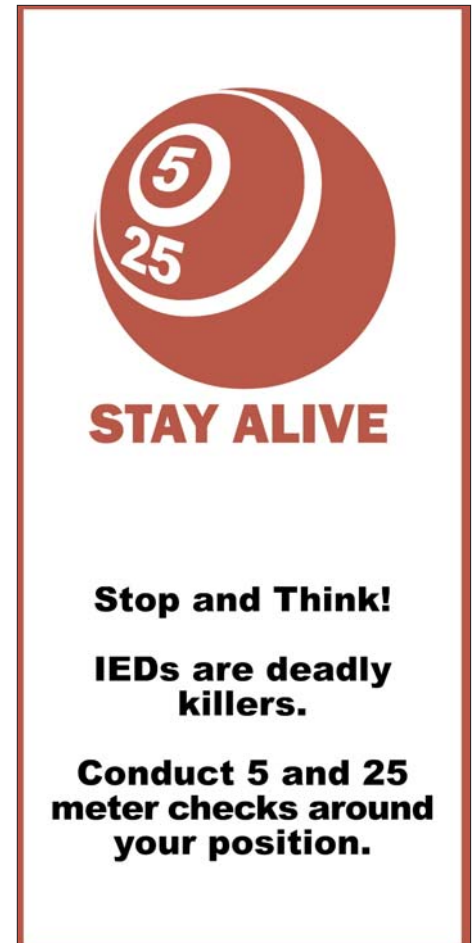


Photo by Senior Airman Shaun Emery

This example of an improvised explosive device which uses a small hand-held radio as a detonator which insurgents would use to set off the bomb.

On the road again...

Convoy Airmen protect Iraq supply lines

By Staff Sgt. **Lindsey Maurice**
332nd AEW Public Affairs

He wipes the sweat from his palms, getting a better grasp on the warm steel handles of the 50-cal. gun. Darkness stretches around him for miles, with the exception of the headlights from his convoy illuminating the road ahead. The Airman remains vigilant as he keeps a watchful eye. At this point he is running off of pure adrenaline.

"It felt like a thousand eyes were on me but I couldn't see anyone," said Airman Aaron Mendez, Detachment 2632 gun truck operator, about his first nighttime convoy mission outside the confines of Balad Air Base, Iraq. "About a million things were going through my mind. I just wanted to make sure everything went smoothly."

Det. 2632 is one of two convoy detachments assigned to the 732nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group. The second unit is Det. 1058, stationed at Forward Operating Base Speicher, in Tikrit, Iraq.

With more than 150 Airmen assigned to Det. 2632, its mission is to provide convoy protection to civilian contractors and Army units delivering supplies throughout the area of responsibility.

"Gun trucks have long played an important role in ensuring the safe passage of personnel and cargo in times of war and Det. 2632 is here to carry on that tradition," said 1st Lt. Edward Torres, Det. 2632 director of operations. "Our Airmen are out there putting their lives on the line every day and they never complain. I feel honored to be associated with such hard working, selfless men and women."

The lieutenant, stationed at Hill AFB, Utah, said the unit can average anywhere from three to seven convoy missions a night with about 30 to 60 vehicles within it.

"The workload can get pretty intense sometimes, depending on how many missions we have and what they are," said the lieutenant. "My crews average 10 to 14-hour days outside the wire. When on the road it's pretty much hurry up, wait, and be



Photos by Staff Sgt. Lindsey Maurice

Senior Airman Clint Berger, Detachment 2632 gun truck operator, loads a string of 7.62mm 50-caliber ammunition prior to going out on a convoy.

flexible. Sometimes days are longer and sometimes shorter, you just never know."

Lieutenant Torres noted that the unit is composed of a variety of Air Force specialties to include transporters, security forces, vehicle mechanics, supply personnel, communications specialists, armory personnel and logistics readiness officers.

Staff Sgt. Brad Mitchell, Det. 2632 lead vehicle commander, said out of the four deployments he's been on, this one is by far the most rewarding.

"This deployment is personal to me," said the staff sergeant, deployed from Eglin AFB, Fla. "I lost a close friend over here doing convoys. I knew him from the time he joined the military.

"On the road it's pretty much hurry up, wait and be flexible."

- 1st Lt. Edward Torres
Det. 2632 director of operations

He was killed by an IED in Mosul, Iraq, last year. I felt it was my duty to come here and honor his name. This deployment has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life."

Prior to the unit's six-month deployment, everyone in the detachment attended a six-week Basic Combat Convoy Course where they were trained to handle various situations they could face in theater such as vehicle attacks, kill zone evacuations, and recovering downed vehicles, said Lieutenant Torres.

In addition, security forces members also attended a heavy-weapons course, while transporters familiarized themselves with any vehicles they were not used to driving on a daily basis. All of the Airmen also underwent heavy-weapons qualification/familiarization, communications training as well as physical training.

Lieutenant Torres stressed the significance of what his troops are doing and the dangers they are faced with on a daily basis.

"Many convoys experience one type or another of what is termed EOF (escalation of force), ranging from a civilian vehicle getting too close to the convoy and us having to 'politely' shoo them away, to an actual improvised explosive device detonating on a convoy and then everyone moving into action as training takes over in one of those unfortunate situations," said Lieutenant Torres. "When one of these situations arises, we do everything in our power to prevent a civilian or coalition casualty first, and then we do what we have to do to protect ourselves, our equipment, as well as the personnel we are escorting by using any means and the minimum amount of force protection necessary."

Senior Airman Clint Berger, Det. 2632



Staff Sgt. Chris Hargis and Senior Airman Clint Berger, both of Detachment 2632, break down a 50-caliber weapon and check it for serviceability prior to performing functional checks, ensuring the weapons are ready before they roll out.

gun truck operator deployed from Ramstein Air Base, Germany, recalled one close encounter he faced with an improvised explosive device during a convoy mission.

"I remember we were coming back from a mission to Baghdad and my vehicle was passing another one to catch back up to our spot in the convoy when I heard a boom. I turned, looked back and saw a black cloud of smoke and debris. An IED had gone off right behind us," he said. "Had we been just a few seconds slower it would have hit our vehicle -- that was a real eye-opener."

With about three months to go in their rotation, the Airmen of Det. 2632 continue to stay focused on their task at hand -- getting themselves and those they are escorting from point A to point B safe and sound.

"They do what they have to do out there to come back to me each and every night, and I thank the Lord for that just before I fall asleep," said Lieutenant Torres.



Staff Sgt. Ivan Ochoa, Detachment 2632 finishes mounting a 50-caliber machine gun and completes his final inspections prior to hitting the road.

Wing provides assistance to victims of Mother Nature

By Master Sgt. **Robert Michel**
332nd AEW historian

The 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing is conducting a fundraiser to benefit the Air Force Enlisted Village, located in Fort Walton Beach and Shalimar Florida, the village provides housing to widows and widowers of Air Force personnel.

Last year's hurricane season caused over \$300,000 in damage to the village. This damage is not covered by the Air Force Assistance Fund, which has limitations on fund usage. As a result, each com-

mand has been asked to assist in the fundraising effort. This is a chance for wing members to help the spouses of those who came before us," said. Master Sgt. Robert Michel, 332nd AEW historian.

All forms of donations are accepted: cash, check or Army Air Force Exchange Service pogs. Please contact your group representative for information or to donate. Points of contact are listed on the 332nd AEW homepage under Hot Items.

For more information check out the village Web site at www.afenlistedwidows.org/.

Airman sentenced in contraband court martial

Airmen reminded to follow general orders in the AOR

By Staff Sgt. **Jerron Barnett** and 2nd Lt. **David Tomiyama**

33rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. (AFPN) — A former 728th Air Control Squadron Airman was sentenced to confinement for one year and dismissal from active duty in a general court martial May 20.

Maj. Gregory McMillion was found guilty on three of four charges: violating a lawful general order; failure to give notice and turn over to proper authority without delay captured or abandoned property; and wrongfully and dishonorably directing subordinates to help ship home the captured or abandoned property.

In the fall of 2003, 728th ACS Airmen unpacked several crates of contraband consisting of Iraqi AK-47s, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, Iraqi uniforms, inert landmines,

rifles, knives and bayonets. These items were found among mission equipment after their return from a seven-month deployment supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Members deployed to Balad Air Base, Iraq, should be aware that they too will be subject to search prior to leaving the area of responsibility.

"We do a 100 percent bag inspection," said Navy Master Chief Vern Lundgren, Navy Expeditionary Logistics Support Force company commander of customs. "We have X-ray machines in route that will perform a more thorough check."

According the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Legal office, trying to bring illegal items back to the states isn't worth the risk.

"If you get caught, you'll be discharged, lose all your benefits," said Tech. Sgt. Marsha Madsen, 332nd AEW paralegal. "It's just not worth it."

For a list of contraband items, visit the 332nd AEW legal office link on the 332nd AEW homepage. (*Senior Airman Shaun Emery contributed to this story*)

HERO from Page 1

Hansen, Major Ryan's actions were heroic, but getting the major to agree would be difficult.

"He would say, he did what anyone else would do in that position," said General Hansen. "Major Ryan's actions exemplify what we all hope we would do if called upon."

The major said he keeps in touch with Airman Kolfage and not a day goes by when he doesn't think about what happened that day.

"He's alive and doing extremely well," said Major Ryan. "He is able to be with his wife and family. I'm glad I was there and knew what to do to keep him around. I wish him and his family the best."

Diamond notes

Personnel will not walk with a cigarette, pipe, cigar, toothpick or any other object in their mouth. Personnel will also not walk with a cigarette, pipe, or cigar in their hand.

From the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing First Sergeant.

Balad AB Religious Schedule

Protestant- Traditional

Sundays:

7:30 a.m. Hospital, 9:30 a.m. Provider Chapel, 11 a.m.

Freedom Chapel

Protestant - Gospel

Sundays

11 a.m. - Sustainer Indoor Theater, 11:30 Freedom

Chapel, 7 p.m. - Provider Chapel

Protestant- Praise and Worship

Sundays

9:30 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater, 10 a.m. Freedom

Chapel, 5:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel, 6:30 p.m. MWR

Tent 29th SPT BN

Wednesdays

7 p.m. Freedom Chapel

Protestant - Contemporary

Sundays

10 a.m. 299th FSB Tent Chapel, 11 a.m. Town Hall,

Latter Day Saints

Sundays

1p.m. Provider Chapel, 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Liturgical- Protestant

Sundays

8 a.m. Provider Chapel

Samoan Congregational Service

Sundays

4 p.m. Provider Chapel

Roman Catholic Mass

Sacrament of Reconciliation 30 min prior to Mass

Wednesdays

11 a.m. Air Force Hospital

Saturdays

5 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel (4:45 p.m. Reconciliation by appointment)

Sundays

8:30 a.m. Freedom Chapel, 9 a.m. Tuskegee Chapel,

11 a.m. Provider Chapel, 3:30 p.m. "626" Chapel (for Special Ops personnel only)

Mondays - Fridays: 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Church of Christ

Sunday

11 a.m. Aviation Village 1, 1-245 ATS/Conf. room

Islamic Prayer

Fridays

13:30 p.m. Provider Chapel

Jewish Prayer

Fridays

6:30 p.m. Provider Chapel Annex

Meet your neighbor



Airman 1st Class Carli Friss

Home station: Malmstrom AFB, Mont.

Unit: 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron

Hobbies: Cooking, water sports

How do you contribute to the mission? I provide security and supervision to third country nationals.

What is your favorite aspect of deployment? Contributing to the mission in a combat environment.

Besides your family, what do you miss back home? I miss the weather and green grass.

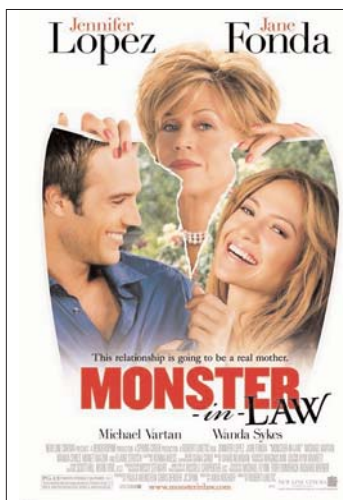
Know what this is?



Photo by Senior Airman Shaun Emery

If you can identify the object, send us an e-mail at redtailflyer@blab.centaf.af.mil. The first person with the correct answer wins a \$5 gift certificate courtesy of the 332nd Expeditionary Services Squadron. Last week's photo of a bull horn was first identified by Airman 1st Class Harvey Marquez, 732nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group.

Sustainer movie schedule



Schedule is subject to change

Today, May 27

3 p.m. - Are We There Yet?
6 p.m. - Hostage
9 p.m. - Monster in Law

Saturday, May 28

3 p.m. - The Ring 2
6 p.m. - Hostage
9 p.m. - Hostage

Sunday, May 29

3 p.m. - Million Dollar Baby
6 p.m. - Hostage
9 p.m. - Monster in Law

Monday, May 30

3 p.m. - Man of the House

6 p.m. - Hostage

9 p.m. - The Ring 2

Tuesday, May 31

3 p.m. - The Aviator
6 p.m. - Monster in Law
9 p.m. - Be Cool

Wednesday, June 1

3 p.m. - Ice Princess
6 p.m. - The Ring 2
9 p.m. - Monster in Law

Thursday, June 2

3 p.m. - House of Wax
6 p.m. - Monster in Law
9 p.m. - Hostage

